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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MADRID 002770

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SUBJECT: SPAIN: VISIT OF INL PDAS SCHWEICH

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Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: During his October 16-17 visit to Madrid, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) Thomas Schweich met with representatives from the Spanish Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Civil Guard, Customs, SEPBLAC (anti-money laundering agency) and Plan Nacional Sobre las Drogas (ONDCP equivalent), to discuss U.S. counter-narcotics policy in Afghanistan and Latin America and to encourage the Spanish to further deepen their cooperation with the USG to stem the flow of drugs coming into the Iberian Peninsula. Schweich pressed his GOS interlocutors to lean on key Latin American countries such as Argentina, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru and Colombia, whose territories are playing an increasing role in the transiting of drugs to Spain, to do more in their efforts to prevent the narcotics flow. The GOS shared USG concerns on narco-trafficking and stressed their desire to further bilateral cooperation in this area. The Spanish are gearing up to host the next meeting of the International Drug Enforcement Conference (IDEC) in May 2007--the first time the conference will be held outside of the Western Hemisphere--and would welcome our advice on how they can strengthen their own multi-agency counter-narcotics efforts. The PDAS' visit reinforced the successful September visit of DEA Administrator Tandy as we work to broaden and deepen our already strong counter-drug efforts with Spain. End Summary.

The Problem Starts at Home

¶2. (C) PDAS Schweich, accompanied by DCM, kicked off his schedule on October 16 with a gathering of top officials of Spain's ONDCP-equivalent National Drug Plan (PNSD), headed by Director Santiago Maccarron. Spain has a large domestic drug problem and Spanish officials discussed the direct correlation they have seen between the increase in the amount of drugs entering their country year after year and the rise in the number of domestic drug addicts. The Ministry of Health recently released a report claiming that almost 30,000

Spanish between the ages of 14 and 18 consume cannabis on a daily basis while 6,000 youth in the same age group use cocaine every day. PNSD officials discussed a recently-launched anti-drug publicity campaign with graphic posters prominently displayed in various Madrid metro stations. Maccarron described PNSD's prevention and rehabilitation programs and how it closely coordinates its demand reduction programs with the Spanish National Police, Civil Guard, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Public Administration. Officials indicated that they looked forward to the establishment of the Maritime Analysis and Operations Center (MAOC) in Lisbon, Portugal, hopefully by early next year. The MAOC is based on the Joint Interagency Task Force model (JIATF), and will combine intelligence with law enforcement capabilities to cut across national borders. PNSD also expressed full support for the IDEC conference to be held in Madrid next May, and is working with DEA to develop the conference agenda that will focus on encouraging coordination and cooperation on issues such as money laundering and cross-border investigative efforts.

¶13. (SBU) Later, at a lunch hosted by PolCouns with various government ministry chiefs of staff in a group collectively known as the Interministerial Group on the National Drug Plan, Schweich heard more about the GOS' efforts to fund capacity-building projects in Latin America. The group expressed concern that Spain is growing as a transit point for Andean narcotics, and noted its general support for USG and European counternarcotics efforts in the Andean region and Afghanistan. Schweich and PolCouns also encouraged greater US-Spain cooperation in judicial and police training in Afghanistan and Iraq. Gregorio Martinez, Chief of Staff to Spanish Interior Minister Rubalcaba, said that Spain would not be opposed to such cooperation, including with Iraqi officials.

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Spanish Law Enforcement

¶14. (C) Spain has three national-level law enforcement entities with authority to conduct narcotics and drug-related financial investigations: the Spanish National Police (SNP), the Spanish Civil Guard (GC) and the Spanish Customs service. Rivalries between these agencies have sometimes hindered the efficiency of Spain's counter-narcotics efforts, but DEA Madrid and Legatt have had success over the past several months in encouraging these services to work together more efficiently. PDAS Schweich and DCM met directly with the new unified head of the GC and SNP, Joan Mesquida, where they discussed how the GOS is working to eliminate stove-piping and turf battles by restructuring the police divisions. The Commissioner General for Judicial Police noted that Spain has the highest cocaine usage rate in Europe, and the Chief of the Judicial Police cited the increasing number of shipments passing through African countries. Officials expressed frustration with the limitations placed on them by Spanish law to fully investigate and apprehend suspects, and expressed hope that the EU could pass meaningful law enforcement reform legislation. Mesquida expressed appreciation for the Embassy's and DEA's support on counter-narcotics efforts, citing the significant number of seizures made recently.

¶15. (C) At a lunch hosted later at the DCM residence, the top deputies from the GC, SNP, and Customs met together to hear from PDAS Schweich about the Department's key role in the counter-narcotics fight and to discuss further avenues for cooperation. Post is currently working with the Ministry of Interior to encourage the Spanish to replicate some of our interagency models that have been successful in the past in fighting narcotics trafficking and money laundering (examples include JIATF-South, Operation Cornerstone, and Maritime

Domain Awareness), and these top law enforcement officials who met with PDAS Schweich will be instrumental partners as we move forward on this effort.

¶ 6. (C) On the money laundering front, the PDAS had the opportunity to meet with Ignacio Palicio, Director of Spain's Financial Intelligence Unit (SEPBLAC) and heard how the office analyzes data from various financial institutions and provides analysis of suspicious activities to Spanish law enforcement and legal authorities. Officials from SEPBLAC's international cooperation, legal, management, and planning divisions detailed how certain financial transactions must be reported to Spain's financial institutions, and how SEPBLAC works with the SNP, GC, and foreign law enforcement agencies to uncover money laundering operations, terrorist transactions, and illicit wire transfers. SEPBLAC expressed appreciation for DEA's assistance in developing its financial investigation techniques, and pledged continued cooperation with DEA and the Embassy.

The View from the MFA

¶ 7. (SBU) PDAS Schweich spent a morning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss the narcotics situation in Afghanistan and Latin America and to hear GOS views on the political and security situations in those regions. Schweich met with Ambassador Jose Luis Solano, who was the top Spanish civilian on the ground in Afghanistan setting up Spain's Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in the western province of Baghdis. Solano discussed the difficulties Spanish forces sometimes have in trying to control a 23,000-square km area with only 180 soldiers in the province, and expressed the view that the Afghans need to take responsibility for their own government. Solano said that despite opposition from a majority of the Spanish population, his government was still strongly behind the Afghan mission. He noted that 17 Spanish soldiers have been killed thus far. When asked by PDAS Schweich why it was so hard for the GOS to get the Spanish population behind the Afghan operation, Solano replied that the main reason for this was due to the geographic isolation

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of the country--in contrast to Spain's operations in Bosnia, Lebanon, and the Congo that, for reasons of history, culture and geography, resonate more with Spanish citizens.

¶ 8. (SBU) Recognizing Spain's unwillingness to send more troops to Afghanistan or to allow the troops already on the ground to join the fighting in the south, PDAS Schweich looked for additional ways the GOS might assist our Afghan mission. One possibility could be in the area of judicial sector reform and the PDAS brought up the subject of Spain's potential participation at the upcoming conference in Rome on this topic. Ambassador Solano indicated that his government would likely be willing and able to participate in and assist with such a conference and post would be happy to engage with the MFA once the conference dates have been set and once an invitation to Spain has been secured. PDAS Schweich thanked the GOS for all that it is doing to advance our mission in Afghanistan but warned of the potential for the spread of increased insurgent and narco-terrorist activity to the western provinces.

¶ 9. (SBU) On Latin America, PDAS Schweich heard from Deputy Director General for Andean Affairs Ramon Santos on the GOS' concern that the government of Bolivian President Morales does not have the capacity to control the flow of narcotics out of the country. Santos posited that Morales' strategy of "Yes to Coca, No to Cocaine," has good intentions but lacks in implementation, and is not tenable in the long run. Santos believes that Morales is losing some of the support of his political base due to still-unfulfilled promises made during the presidential campaign, and sees the risk of

political instability in the long run. PDAS Schweich discussed with Santos the issue of US drug certification for countries such as Bolivia and Venezuela and Santos used that opportunity to reiterate Spain's concern about the increasingly erratic and unstable behavior of Venezuelan President Chavez.

¶10. (C) Comment: The visit of PDAS Schweich dovetailed nicely with the visit to Madrid in mid September of DEA Administrator Karen Tandy and provided an important opportunity to educate the Spanish on the Department's key role in the counter-narcotics effort. The Spanish government knows it faces serious challenges on the narcotics front and it ranks drug trafficking as one of its most important law enforcement concerns. The Spanish continue to maintain excellent relations with US law enforcement, and the visit of the PDAS proved to be an effective forum in which to discuss additional avenues of multi-agency cooperation between our two governments. As the date of next year's IDEC approaches, improved counternarcotics strategies will be near the top of the Spanish agenda, and we will have numerous opportunities to engage with them on this vital issue.

¶11. (U) INL PDAS Schweich cleared this cable.
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